



Effect of Banditry on School Attendance Among Students in Sakaba Local Government Area, Kebbi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research work studied the Effect of Banditry on School Attendance among Students in Sakaba Local Government Area of Kebbi State, Nigeria. This study used a mixed method. This is a case study and the population of the study comprised 5434 students, 60 teachers and 2717 parents. The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling for the selection of schools, systematic sampling for the selection of parents and convenient sampling for the selection of teachers. Two instruments for data collection were used; Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and a Questionnaire. The validity of the instruments was determined by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation while a reliability index of 0.76 for the Questionnaire was arrived at after conducting a test re test. The reliability of the Qualitative instrument was determined through administration on a wide range of participants outside the study area. Analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and percentages. The study revealed the problems faced and the effects of Banditry on Secondary School attendance such as: the feeling of fear and anxiety, trauma and psychological impact, disruption of daily school routines and extra-curricular activities, lack of safety measures, displacement and destruction of infrastructure and economic impact among others.

INTRODUCTION

Banditry is a derivative of the term bandit meaning an unlawful armed group terrorizing people and confiscating their properties. It is synonymous with the establishment of gang groups who use small and light weapons to carry out attacks against people. In this regard, banditry could mean a set-up criminal activity deliberately designed and carried out for personal gains. Banditry refers to the incidences of armed robbery or allied violent crimes, such as kidnapping, cattle rustling, and village or market raids. It involves the use of force, or threat to that effect, to intimidate a person or a group of persons in order to rob, rape or kill (Okoli & Okpaleke 2018). Economic or political interests motivate banditry. The former refers to banditries motivated by the imperative of material accumulation while the latter has to do with those driven by the quest to rob, to assault or to liquidate a person or a group of persons based on political or ideological dispositions (Okoli & Ugwu, 2022).

Civil instability, terrorist threats, banditry, and persistent abductions of Nigerians, notably the well-publicized abduction of schoolboys and schoolgirls by a bandit and terrorist gang, highlight Nigeria's ongoing security and national development issues. How to ensure national development in the face of numerous and constantly expanding security threats is one of the most fundamental difficulties facing modern states (Abdulyakeen, 2019). Banditry refers to the incidence or frequency of armed robberies or violent crimes. It entails the use of force or the threat of force with the goal to rob, rape, or kill a person. Banditry is a person-oriented crime. It has been a prevalent type of crime and a source of violence in modern society (Best, 2022).

The problem of insecurity in the country, has led to a large number of professional educators been killed, hurting the administration of educational institutions in Nigeria. This statute has lowered the number of teachers needed for effective school administration, particularly in the north of the country. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2019), Boko Haram has killed 2,300 teachers in Nigeria's north-eastern region since the war began in 2009. The implication of this is that the quality of education would decline because the educational sector will confront a shortage of qualified teachers. Okeowo and Kayode (2021) observed that graduates who are made during the era of insecurity do not have the required knowledge and skills needed to work in the workplace. In the end, it hurts the performance of organizations and by extension, the economy of the whole country.

In Nigeria, numerous State Governments have closed all schools to prevent more attacks. In Borno, one of the worst devastated States, schools at all levels have been shuttered for at least two years in 22 of 27 Local Government districts, and public secondary schools. Over 57% of schools in Borno, the worst-hit State, are closed as the new school year begins (Chumba et al., 2018). Following the kidnapping of hundreds of students in Katsina State, other States in Northern Nigeria have ordered all schools to close (BBC, 2020). School closures impair children's education quality. Insecurity and school closure prevent covering works and syllables. According to Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Nigeria's country representative in Timothy (2020), the new wave of kidnapping is seriously

harming Nigerian educational system. Insecurity and threats to educational facilities at a time of the pandemic has led some parents to withdraw their children from school while some have not sent their children back to school, compounding an already difficult situation. Okeowo and Kayode (2021) stated that students are being internally displaced due to insecurity in Nigeria, particularly in the Northern region indicating that this has an impact on educational institutions and students' administration. Adding that when a terrorist group strikes a community, schools are frequently among the first targets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structural Functionalism

Functionalism is a traditional sociological theory whose origin is traced to Auguste Comte (1798-1857). The theory compares society with a living organism in its analogy. It argues that human society just like an organism has structures; family politics, economy, religion, education, technology, industry, and social control (security); and these structures work together in an interrelated, interconnected and interdependent manner for the survival of the whole, and to promote solidarity and stability (Ritzer, 2014; Okakon, 2010; Olabisi et al, 2017). The central assumption of the theory is, it sees society as a system and institutions as sub-systems or parts that work together for the survival of the whole.

These parts or structures are strongly related independently, and each performs a certain function toward maintaining the whole. The role could be manifest or latent and they have continued to hold society together. Should any of these parts fail to perform their expected role, it affects the whole negatively and the society becomes dysfunctional. To the theme of this research, therefore, banditry could be attributed to the failure of the social control institutions (court, police, and correctional) that is saddled with the responsibility of protecting the lives and property of people in society. These generate insecurity, like armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, assassination, insurgency, terrorism, communal clashes, drug and human trafficking.

Statement of the Problem

There are strong indications that three Local Government Areas; Sakaba, Danko/Wasagu and Fakai in Kebbi State are witnessing increased invasion of bandits since year 2021 with thousands of villagers fleeing their communities for safety. Banditry, which started as isolated cases in Zuru Emirate some seven years ago had become a large-scale daily occurrence from 2020, taking peak with many people becoming victims of insecurity. Following the insecurity situation, a large number of livestock have been rustled and mostly their owners displaced from their communities. The security challenges are causing a massive influx of villagers who sometimes trek for hours to reach the nearest urban or semi-urban areas that are considered safe in Zuru Emirate. D

uring a pilot interview conducted on 1st June, 2022 it was discovered that banditry activities started on Tuesday, 17th April 2021, when bandits attacked Sakaba Local Government, through Makuku village where they went away with

a lot of cattle (cow, sheep, goats) and people of both sex from the community. After the attacks of Makuku village, banditry activities continued through Dankolo, Jan Birni, Maganda, Doka, Unguwar Marafa, Maza Maza, Rafin Gora, Sakaba, Tsohon Birnin, Laraba and Bere. People in large numbers run from other places to Dirin Daji for safety. Other places with IDPs are Dirin Gari, Jan Birni and Bere. Other issues arising from banditry are stress, hunger and lack of certainty for safety.

During one of the attacks in Maganda village, Adai Ward in Sakaba LGA cattle were stolen and grains burnt while the inhabitants of the community had to run for their safety. These acts have been devastating and have led to the closure of schools in most of the communities. Attempts have been made by the Kebbi State Government and philanthropists to donate food items to salvage the situation though not much has been done to get students back to school. In the month of March 2022 Traditional rulers of the affected communities told BBC Hausa that the vigilantes were ambushed while chasing the bandits who had attacked their communities.

The effects of insecurity in the administration of Nigerian educational institutions include loss of manpower in educational institutions, poor quality of education, brain-drain, closure of educational institutions, and discouragement of educational pursuit by children. Others are internal displacement of learners, reduction of private investment in education, inadequate funding of education, increase in the total number of banditry activities in Sakaba local government, Area, Kebbi State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The design for this research is a case study. A case study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of complex issues in its real-life context. This design is found to be useful and is used to investigate how banditry affect school attendance of students in Sakaba Local Government Area, Kebbi State, Nigeria. The population consist of all ten (10) government owned Secondary Schools in Sakaba Local Government Area with a total number of 5434 students and 60 teachers respectively.

However, the population of parents is derived from the students target population. Multistage sampling technique is applied to arrive at the samples. Using purposive sampling, the selection of four (4) schools with 1995 students was made from the prone bandit attacked areas/communities. A sample of 134 parents is drawn using systematic sampling. Thus, parents' sample is determined using students at an interval of 15, while the sample for teachers which is 15 were determined using convenience sampling (Makuku 62 and 8; Maza-Maza 20 and 3; Dankolo 30 and 3; Doka 22 and 1).

The basic tools used for the collection of data were both Quantitative and Qualitative instruments; Focus Group Discussions (FGD) for parents with ten (10) items on the schedule while the quantitative instrument which comprised of two sections (A and B) is a self-designed close-ended questionnaire which contains sources of information, designed for the teachers. The FGD for parents was carried out by the researcher and a research assistant where questions were asked with constant probing on the issues as outlined in the objectives. There

were eleven (11) FGD groups of 10 to 12 respondents each and parents were grouped based on their sample size; Makuku town had five (5) groups; Maza Maza town had two (2) groups, Dankolo town three (3) groups and Doka village two (2) groups. The qualitative data was described in details using content analysis there by interpreting the discussions from the respondents. The quantitative data which complemented the qualitative data were put on a column and allocated scores as follows: SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1. The responses were tallied and the mean (\bar{x}) was computed for each of the items.

RESEARCH RESULT

Descriptive Data of Focus Group Discussions Participants (FGD)

Table 1: Distribution of Participants by Age

S/N	Age of Participants	Frequency	Percentage
1	25-35	15	11.19
2	36-45	57	42.53
3	46-56	34	25.37
4	57-67	21	15.67
5	68-78	7	5.22
	Total	134	100

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 1 shows the distribution of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants by age. Those between the age of 25-35 years were 15 in number and were represented 11.19%; between the age of 36-45 years had 42.53%; between 46-56 had 25.37%, those with 57-67 years of age were 15.67% and those between the age of 68-78 years are seven (7) in number and had a low representation of 5.22%.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants by Occupation

S/N	Type of Occupations	Frequency	Percentages
1	Civil Servants	9	6.71
2	Farmers	78	58.20
3	Hunters	13	9.70
4	Business/Women	25	18.66
5	Others	9	6.71
	Total	134	100

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 8 shows that civil servant is 9 representing 6.71%, Farmers were 78 representing the most with 58.20%, Hunters were 13 representing 9.70%, Business/Women were 25 representing 18.66%, Others (religion leaders, local vigilante, politician, retired educationist and so on) are 9 in number representing 6.71%.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Research Question One: What are the problems faced by secondary school students during Banditry in Sakaba Local Government?

The respondents observed that secondary school students face a lot of problems during banditry among which are discussed as sub-themes below:

Fear and Anxiety: Banditry creates a sense of fear and insecurity among children leaving them with the feelings that they could be attacked by bandits on their way to school. The respondents observed that their children always leave the house in the morning before school hours because they do not want to go to school. The re-occurring threat of violence can lead to increased stress and anxiety levels. Thus, one of the participants in a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Makuku town stated that;

A lot of experiences were encountered during the period of attack in Makuku. My children became traumatized, it led to the extent that they do not want to hear anything called school, because of the fear that bandit will attack the town again. (*Adult, Male, Farmer, 46 years*).

Trauma and psychological impact: Witnessing or experiencing banditry can traumatize secondary school students, leading to various categories of disorder, depression, and other psychological issues. They struggle with emotional well-being and have difficulties concentrating on their studies. In the course of an FGD a participant in Maza Maza pointed out that:

I have four (4) children that are in secondary school, they are psychologically disturbed as a result of banditry. One among the children always seats quietly as a result of the face-to-face experience and contacts he had with the bandits during one of the attacks in our town (*Male, Civil Servant, 49 Years, Rural*).

Disruption of Daily School Routines and Extracurricular Activities: Banditry often results in the closure of schools, frequent interruptions in the learning process which negatively impact students' academic performance and future prospects. Banditry has led many students to run away for safety and which has effect on daily school routine. An 18-year-old participant who is also a student and a resident of Sakaba town stated:

Banditry activities has led most of entire village member abandon their homes to safe villages. Often, when the bandits attack a place and they do not find anything to cart away with, they burn down our houses and property. As for students, they cannot able to go to school because they are not after school

that time, because their priority is their life and personal safety.

Banditry activities can lead to the cancellation or suspension of extracurricular activities; sports, and field trips. The respondents observed that when these attacks are at their prime, a community could be attacked twice a week leaving everyone disrupted from their daily life activities, school attendance inclusive. Elaborately, a 56-year-old hunter from Dankolo rural community highlighted thus:

Many activities that our children used to compete in their various schools, such as inter school sports competition, quiz and debates in the last two years have been cancelled as a result of frequent attacks in our town and villages. School activities have become skeletal as even normal teaching is done under a lot of fear and uncertainties posed by banditry activities.

Lack of Safety Measures: In the areas prone to banditry, the secondary schools there were found to lack adequate security measures; fences, trained security personnel and or panic alarm systems. Generally, the FGD participants believed that lack of safety measures contributed much to the attacks as a participant in Maza Maza village stated that:

The only measure most of people take now is self-defence mechanism which culminated into 'Yan sa kai' (local policing). You find children of school age joining such groups in the bid to protect their family members and communities...this has reduced the number of attacks in our area, thereby encouraging our children to attend school although with a divided attention (*Farmer, 40 Years, Rural*).

A 35 years old participant added that, the government has failed to protect their lives and property adding that this has adverse effect on children's school attendance and for those who manage to attend, did so with a lot of fear of banditry activities.

Research Question Two: How does banditry affect school attendance of children in Sakaba. Local Government?

Banditry can have a significant effect on school attendance in affected areas. Following a series of discussions with the participants, the following sub-themes were derived and as explained below;

Fear and Safety concerns: Banditry creates an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, making parents reluctant to send their children to school. In an FGD in Makuku village, a 20-year-old man/student when asked on the effect it has on school attendance, highlighted that;

I will always remember that particular Saturday when bandits attacked Makuku. The whole community was scattered with everyone running for their lives. Since then, the schools have been closed, even after some days when some people came back to the village, many did not send their children to school including me, which largely affect the attendance of the students and also the attendance of teachers.

Another respondent in Maza Maza observed that:

You see life is everything; without this life you cannot do anything. However, if there are attacks, it must affect school attendance of both the teachers and the students of the school. This is because many parents take their children and leave the village for safety. More so even the teachers are afraid to come to school because of fear for their lives (*Male, 44 Years, Farmer, Rural*).

Furthermore, a participant stated that,

My perception has completely changed. Because i do not have any guarantee of my safety and that of my children. So as a result of that i stopped them from going to school. However, even the children are afraid to go to school because of fear of attacks (*Male, Businessman, 43 Years, Rural*).

Displacement and destruction of infrastructure: Families may be forced to flee their homes, leading to the displacement of students and interrupted education. Disrupted transportation system for instance can also make it difficult for students to reach schools. In discussions with one of the groups in Dankolo observed that:

There is a lot of movement of people from one village to another during the bandit attacks. Because many people are running for their lives, properties are lost in the course of the indiscrete movement. These also mostly

affect every activity in the community including the school system as well as school attendance (*Male, 49 Years, Civil Servant, Rural*).

Banditry can result in the destruction of school buildings, classrooms, and educational facilities. This damage can render schools unsafe or unusable, further impacting attendance rates. In an FGD most of the participants were of the opinion that, banditry affect villages, destruction of properties, school, as sometimes ago classes were burnt including their chairs. A respondent maintained that there was a time when the Bandits attacked Doka, houses, school and any other important item in the village were burnt down. Thus, these acts not only disrupted the activities in the village but as well those of the school, attendance in particular. Among the FGD participants in (Doka) it was observed that:

Children in the school, every member of the community and even traditional rulers are not safe. In fact, our children's behaviours have changed completely because they are reluctant to go to school every time because of fear. Our terrains are no longer safe and most of the children from far and near are afraid and that affects their numbers in school (*Males, 60 Years, Village Elder, Rural*).

Economic impact: Banditry can negatively affect the local economy, leading to increased poverty and unemployment. These could make it difficult for families to afford school related expenses; uniforms, books and transportation, leading to decreased attendance. During the FGD many people among the groups maintained that banditry activities affect a lot of their economic activities; farming, hunting, buying and selling of goods and services. A respondent in (Sakaba) stated that,

We run for our lives on almost daily basis. There is no time for farming because of bandit attacks. We are forced to leave our village to other villages. This has significantly affected our sources of income. In fact, this has affected our ability to send our children to school (*Male, 41 Years, Black Smith, Rural*)

Psychological impact: These emotional effects can make it challenging for students to concentrate on their studies and may result in increased absenteeism. The FGD participants maintained that the children are always afraid and

skeptical about attending school insisting that they do not wish to die in the hands of bandits. A participant stated that:

We noticed that change in attitude because before the emergence of banditry our children do go to schools regularly. Nowadays they do not want to go, so this behaviour shows us that psychologically, banditry has negative effects on the lives of our children since they are afraid of bandits
(Male, 66 Years, Business Man, Rural)

Efforts to mitigate the impact of banditry on school attendance include improving security measures, providing counselling and support services to affected students, rebuilding damaged infrastructure, and promoting community engagement to restore a sense of safety and normalcy.

Quantitative Analyses

Table 3: Problems faced by secondary school students during Bandit Attacks

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remarks
1	Student's activities and academic work are disrupted because of banditry	13	2	0	0	3.87	Agree
2	Banditry have hindered the delivery of quality education	9		0	0	3.60	Agree
3	Banditry drastically affects effective and efficient running of school system	11	3	1	0	3.60	Agree
4	Banditry affects school enrolment in Sakaba Local Government area of Kebbi State	6	6	0	1	3.33	Agree
5	Teachers reject appointment if they are posted to one of the areas affected by banditry	6	3	2	4	2.87	Agree
6	Banditry reduces educational intervention and projects in areas prone to bandit attacks	7	6	1	1	3.27	Agree
7	Students learn in fear and feel insecure from banditry	11	4	0	0	3.73	Agree

Source: Fieldwork

A look at table 3 reveals that mean scores for the items satisfied the threshold for acceptance and as such are categorized as "Agree". This is an

indication that the respondents agreed that secondary school students in the area of study face a lot of problems due to banditry activities. This then substantially answers research question one and it could be concluded that students face problems due to banditry.

Table 4: The Effect of Banditry on School Attendance

S/N	QUESTIONS	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Remarks
1	Students find it difficult to go school after banditry	10	4	0	1	3.60	Agree
2	Students find it difficult to stay freely at school after banditry activities	9	6	0	0	3.60	Agree
3	Students are faced with fear of lack of protection and safety while in school	7	7	1	0	3.33	Agree
4	Many parents withdraw their children from school as a result of banditry	5	9	0	1	3.27	Agree
5	Banditry has effect on school attendance	9	5	1	0	3.47	Agree
6	Banditry encourages school dropout among students	5	8	0	2	3.20	Agree
7	Students do not always come to school for fear of being attacked	7	7	0	1	3.40	Agree
8	Parent's sources of income are affected as a result of banditry which in turn affects school attendance	10	5	0	0	3.67	Agree

Source: Fieldwork

A look at table 4 reveals that mean scores for the items satisfied the threshold for acceptance and as such are categorized as "Agree". This is an indication that the respondents agreed that banditry activities affect school attendance of children in the area of study. This then substantially answer research question two and it could be concluded that banditry activities affect school attendance of children.

DISCUSSION

It was found out in this study that some of the problems faced in banditry prone areas are fear and anxiety, trauma and psychological stress, disruption of daily routines and extracurricular activities due to the traumatic events been witnessed or experienced by students and the community as a whole. It was also found out that, fear and safety concerns, destruction of infrastructure, economic

and psychological impact were among the effects of banditry on school attendance. This is closely in agreement with the findings of Bagu and Smith (2017) and Okoli & Ugwu (2019) where they observed that local bandits, take advantage of the growing insecurity, fear and cyclical attacks to loot villages, engage in highway robbery, and rustle cattle for personal gain. Both farming and herding communities often suffer from this criminality.

Additionally, banditry often leads to the closure of schools, causing a disruption in school activities, extracurricular activities inclusive. This is in line with the findings of Nwosu, Ukwunna, Ebokaiwe and Ukwunna, (2019) who opined that school interruption can result in learning gaps, decreased academic performance, and difficulties in catching up with missed lessons. Indicating that armed bandits have repeatedly attacked secondary schools and tertiary institutions in some States within North-western Nigeria. Hence, students and parents especially in areas close to or with high rate of armed banditry operations no longer have appetite for schooling.

Further, over 57% of schools in Borno, the worst-hit State, are closed as the new school year begins (Chumba et al., 2018). Following the kidnapping of hundreds of students in Katsina State, other States in Northern Nigeria have ordered all schools to close (BBC, 2020). School closures impair children's education quality.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the presentation and analyses of data, thus the study concludes that fear and anxiety, trauma and psychological impact, disruption of daily routines and extracurricular activities and lack of safety measures are some of the problems faced by students. The effects of banditry activities on students' school attendance are reflected in a decrease in student's attendance, fear and safety concerns, displacement and destruction of infrastructure, economic impact and psychological impact.

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. To ensure safety and security there is need to implement strict security measures in and around schools to protect students from potential attacks. This may include increased surveillance, security personnel, and secure fencing, because many of the secondary schools are not fenced.
2. There is the need to create safe learning environment through fostering a sense of safety and normalcy within the schools. This can be achieved by conducting regular safety drills, ensuring well-lit and secure classrooms, and promoting a positive school culture that encourage open communication.
3. There is need to engage parents and guardians in discussions about safety measures and provide them with resources to support their children's emotional well-being. Encourage open line communication between schools and families to address concerns and provide updates on security measures

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